



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS TRENTON (LPD-14)
FPO NEW YORK 09588-1716

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From: Commanding Officer, USS TRENTON (LPD 14)
To: Deputy Director of Naval History, Office of the Chief of
Naval Operations, Washington, DC 20350-2000

Subj: 1989 COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) CNO ltr 5757 Ser 09B/SH/506664 of 24 Aug 90
(b) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

Encl: (1) Biography of Captain R. M. Nutwell, USN
(2) Photograph and biography of Captain J. A. Curtis, USN
(3) 1989 Chronology
(4) 1989 Command Narrative
(5) 1989 Plan of the Day
(6) TRENTON Welcome Aboard Pamphlet
(7) Photograph of USS TRENTON
(8) Change of Command Program
(9) President Bush letter dated 31 January 1990
(10) Letter of Commendation
(11) Copies of 1989 Press Releases

1. In response to reference (a), enclosures (1) through (11) are submitted in accordance with reference (b).

a. Background: USS TRENTON (LPD 14), an amphibious transport dock, is named for the historical capital of New Jersey that was founded by an 18th century ship owner and businessman, Colonel William Trent. The present USS TRENTON is the third U.S. vessel to bear the name. The first was a steam sloop of war commissioned in 1874. The second was a light cruiser, CL-111, commissioned in 1924, which served with Asiatic, Caribbean and Southeast Pacific Fleets during World War II. The keel for the present TRENTON was laid on 8 August 1966. She was christened on 3 August 1968 by Mrs. Richard J. Hughes, wife of the then governor of New Jersey. TRENTON's mission is to transport, land, and support marine forces on a hostile shore. The Amphibious Transport Dock (LPD) is a very versatile class of amphibious ship. TRENTON can carry over 900 troops plus their vehicles, equipment, weapons ammunition and supplies. She also carries landing craft in her floodable well deck and topside, and she can operate helicopters and VTOL aircraft from her flight deck. TRENTON participated in the 1983 liberation of Grenada, was a member of the multinational force off the coast of Beirut, Lebanon in 1983-1984, and was a participant in Operation "PRAYING MANTIS" in April 1988 while deployed to the Persian Gulf. In 1989 she participated in the historic Presidential Summit off the coast of Malta.

Subj: 1989 COMMAND HISTORY

b. Commanding Officer:

- 1) Captain Robert M. Nutwell, USN, 1 Jan - 18 Aug 1989
- 2) Captain James A. Curtis, USN, 18 Aug - 31 Dec 1989

c. Homeport: Norfolk, Virginia

d. Chronology: Attached as enclosure (3).

e. Narrative: Attached as enclosure (4).

f. Statistics:

- 1) Navigation: Miles traveled for 1989: 20,897.
- 2) Air: Landings - 2753 for CY 1989. 29047 in ship's history.
- 3) Engineering: Ship's fuel consumed - 3,552,191 gallons.
- 4) Supply: Number of underway replenishments - 3.
- 5) Weapons: Large caliber ammunition expended - 168 rounds. CIWS ammunition expended - 1874 rounds.

g. Awards received 1989: The following departmental awards were received in conjunction with the battle efficiency award:

- 1) Mobility Propulsion Award (Engineering 'E')
- 2) Damage Control Award
- 3) Electronics Warfare Award
- 4) Command, Control and Communications Award
- 5) Amphibious Seamanship Award


J. A. CURTIS

CHRONOLOGY

1 - 29 JAN	INPORT NORFOLK, VA
19 JAN	AVIATION CERTIFICATION INSPECTION
30 JAN - 3 FEB	MTT/ETST VACAPES OPAREAS
4 FEB - 26 FEB	INPORT NORFOLK, VA
6 FEB	MOGAS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM INSPECTION
7 FEB	NAVAL SAFETY CENTER SAFETY INSPECTION
27 FEB - 3 MAR	MTT VACAPES OPAREAS
4 - 5 MAR	INPORT NORFOLK, VA
6 - 10 MAR	RRC OPS/DLQ QUALS CHEESAPEAKE BAY
11 - 19 MAR	INPORT NORFOLK, VA
20 - 24 MAR	CSLTT/DCLTT/DLQ QUALS OPAREAS
25 - 26 MAR	INPORT NORFOLK, VA
28 - 29 MAR	82ND AIRBORNE COMPLETED 375 DECK LANDING QUALIFICATIONS
28 MAR	FIRST AH-64 NIGHT SHIPBOARD HELICOPTERS LANDING COMPLETED
30 MAR - 9 APR	INPORT NORFOLK, VA
10 - 14 APR	INSURV VACAPES OPAREAS
15 - 24 APR	INPORT NORFOLK, VA
25 - 27 APR	U.S. ARMY/MARINE DLQS VACAPES OPAREAS
28 APR - 3 MAY	INPORT NORFOLK, VA
4 - 20 MAY	SOLID SHIELD CARIBBEN OPAREAS
21 MAY - 11 JUN	INPORT NORFOLK, VA
12 - 16 JUN	DLQ QUALS VACAPES OPAREAS
17 - 18 JUN	INPORT NORFOLK, VA

19 - 23 JUN	TYCOM AMPHIB OPS CHESABAY
24 - 25 JUN	INPORT NORFOLK, VA
26 - 29 JUN	PHIB LTT CHESAPEAKE BAY
30 JUN	DEPENDENTS CRUISE CHESABAY
1 - 30 JUL	INPORT NORFOLK, VA
31 JUL - 8 AUG	TYCOMP AMPHIB OPS WLANT
9 - 13 AUG	INPORT NORFOLK, VA
14 - 15 AUG	AMMUNITIONS ONLOAD YORKTOWN, VA
16 - 21 AUG	INPORT NORFOLK, VA
18 AUG	CHANGE OF COMMAND
22 AUG - 12 SEP	FLEETEX 4-89
22 AUG	TRANSIT TO MOREHEAD CITY, NC
23 AUG	24TH MEU MARINE ONLOAD MOREHEAD CITY, NC
23 - 25 AUG	TRANSIT WLANT
26 AUG - 1 SEP	AMPHIB OPS VIEQUES, PR
2 SEP	INPORT ROOSEVELT ROADS, PR
3 - 5 SEP	TRANSIT WLANT
6 - 10 SEP	AMPHIB OPS ONSLOW BAY, NC
11 SEP	MARINE DEBARKATION MOREHEAD CITY, NC
12 SEP - 10 OCT	INPORT NORFOLK, VA
11 OCT - 31 DEC	MEDITERRANEAN DEPLOYMENT MARG 1-90
11 OCT	TRANSIT
12 OCT	MARINE ONLOAD MOREHEAD CITY, NC
12 - 24 OCT	TRANSLANT
25 OCT - 4 NOV	INPORT ROTA, SPAIN

5 - 14 NOV	SPANISH PHIBLEX SIERRA DEL RATIN, SPAIN
15 - 21 NOV	INPORT FLAMA DE MALLORCA, SPAIN
22 - 24 NOV	TRANSIT WMED
25 - 26 NOV	INPORT MARSEILLES, FRANCE
27 - 29 NOV	TRANSIT WMED
30 NOV - 4 DEC	PRESIDENTIAL SUMMIT, MALTA
5 DEC	TRANSIT WMED
6 - 8 DEC	ANCHORED NAPLES, ITALY
9 DEC	TRANSIT WMED
10 - 19 DEC	TUNISIAN PHIBLEX
15 - 16 DEC	COMPLETED 81 TUNISIAN ARMY PILOT DECK LANDING QUALIFICATIONS
20 DEC	TRANSIT WMED
21 - 31 DEC	ANCHORED NAPLES, ITALY

COMMAND NARRATIVE

The year 1989 proved to be a most successful one for TRENTON. Beginning with her above average performance during April's Board of Inspection and Survey, a precedence of excellence was established that was not to be tarnished.

In May, TRENTON shone in her first operational test, amphibious exercise "Solid Shield." After a few additional training evolutions in port and at sea, the ship started preparing for her fall deployment to the Mediterranean in earnest. Completing her final work up operations on or ahead of schedule off the coast Vieques, P.R., TRENTON departed Roosevelt Roads with the title of "Top Gator" for Mediterranean Amphibious Ready Group 1-90. With Fleetex 4-89 behind her, TRENTON entered a leave and upkeep in September as a last breather prior to deployment.

TRENTON's visit to Rota, Spain for INCHOP to Sixth Fleet was repeatedly beset by adverse weather. She was initially delayed from entering port due to high winds. This did not dampen spirits, however, and preparations went forward for the first Mediterranean exercise, the Spanish Phiblex at Sierra del Retin. TRENTON proved her versatility and professionalism as operations during this exercise went without a hitch despite harsh sea conditions, high winds and high surf. The exercise wrapped up in 60 knot winds that led to the destruction of one of the ship's anchor windlasses. She got underway however and met her next commitment thanks to a particularly innovative bit of seamanship by deck department.

As the holiday season approached, TRENTON's sailors and embarked marines were treated to a pre-Thanksgiving dinner hosted by the Navy League of Palma de Mallorca. Thanksgiving itself was spent at sea with a feast prepared by TRENTON's own mess specialists.

While in Marseilles, France, TRENTON hosted Norfolk local television station WVEC's news team for a "Christmas in the Med" special. Late November found TRENTON tasked with providing support for the historic Summit between President George Bush and Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev at Malta. Battling the worst storm off the Maltese coast in eighty years, the embarked Marines of A Company BLT 1/8 provided rigid raider craft support and TRENTON's boat crews provided escort and security service for the diplomatic corps.

After a short port visit to Naples, Italy, TRENTON was off to Tunisia for a joint exercise with the marines of that country. The ship once again proved she was Top Gator material, accomplishing her tasks in a timely and professional manner. TRENTON also provided flight deck services for the Tunisian Army for Deck Landing Qualifications.

The close of 1989 found TRENTON enjoying Christmas and New Year's Holidays in Naples, Italy.

CAPTAIN JAMES A. CURTIS

COMMANDING OFFICER
USS TRENTON (LPD 14)

CAPTAIN JAMES A. CURTIS, A NATIVE OF (b) (6) ENLISTED IN THE U.S. NAVY IN 1959, WAS HONORABLY DISCHARGED IN 1962, AND GRADUATED FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN 1966.

HE WAS COMMISSIONED THROUGH OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL IN NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND, IN 1968 AND RECEIVED HIS WINGS AT ELLYSON FIELD, FLORIDA, IN 1969. HIS FIRST ASSIGNMENT WAS WITH HA(L)-3 IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. IN JUNE, 1971, HE WAS ATTACHED TO HS-7.

FOLLOWING A TOUR AS AN N.R.O.T.C. INSTRUCTOR AT THE CITADEL, CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA, WHERE HE WAS ALSO AWARDED A MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE, HE SERVED WITH HS-5 AND COMHSWINGONE IN JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA.

HE REPORTED TO HS-11, JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA, IN JANUARY 1983, AS EXECUTIVE OFFICER, ASSUMING COMMAND IN JUNE, 1984. AFTER COMMANDING HS-1 (1986-1987), HE REPORTED TO NMPC, WASHINGTON, D.C., WHERE HE SERVED AS BRANCH HEAD FOR OFFICER, PLANS, POLICY AND COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT.

AMONG HIS MANY MILITARY AWARDS ARE THE SILVER STAR, THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS, THE LEGION OF MERIT, TWO MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDALS AND THIRTY-TWO AIR MEDALS.

CAPTAIN CURTIS IS MARRIED TO THE FORMER (b) (6) OF (b) (6). THEY HAVE TWO SONS: (b) (6) LIVING IN ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA AND (b) (6) LIVING IN NORFOLK, VIRGINIA.

CAPTAIN ROBERT M. NUTWELL

COMMANDING OFFICER
USS TRENTON (LPD-14)

CAPTAIN NUTWELL WAS BORN IN (b) (6) AND SPENT HIS CHILDHOOD IN MARYLAND AND NEW JERSEY. HE GRADUATED FROM THE U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY IN 1966 AND ENTERED FLIGHT TRAINING IMMEDIATELY, RECEIVING HIS WINGS IN OCTOBER 1967. HE HAS SERVED IN THREE A-7 CORSAIR II SQUADRONS, INCLUDING COMMAND OF VA-105 IN 1979-1980. FOLLOWING A TOUR ON THE COMNAVAIRLANT STAFF CAPTAIN NUTWELL ENTERED NUCLEAR PROPULSION TRAINING, FOLLOWED BY ASSIGNMENT AS EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF USS NIMITZ (CVN-68) FROM JUNE 1984 TO JULY 1986. CAPTAIN NUTWELL THEN SERVED IN THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS (NAVAL WARFARE DIRECTORATE) AS THE DIRECTOR OF A WARFARE ANALYSIS GROUP UNTIL NOVEMBER 1987. HE TOOK COMMAND OF TRENTON ON 5 FEBRUARY 1988 ENROUTE TO THE PERSIAN GULF.

CAPTAIN NUTWELL IS A GRADUATE OF THE U.S. NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL AND THE NAVAL WAR COLLEGE. HE HOLDS A MASTER'S DEGREE IN OPERATIONS RESEARCH AND IS QUALIFIED AS A SURFACE WARFARE OFFICER. HIS DECORATIONS INCLUDE THE LEGION OF MERIT, THE MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL WITH TWO GOLD STARS, AND THE AIR MEDAL.

CAPTAIN NUTWELL IS MARRIED TO THE FORMER (b) (6) WHO WORKS AS A REFERENCE LIBRARIAN AT THE VIRGINIA BEACH CENTRAL LIBRARY. THEY LIVE IN VIRGINIA BEACH WITH THEIR SONS (b) (6) (17) AND (b) (6) (13).

"THE EXERCISE WENT REMARKABLY WELL, CONSIDERING THE MANY PROBLEMS THAT COULD ARISE IN AN EXERCISE OF THIS MAGNITUDE AND COMPLEXITY. COMMUNICATIONS WAS A PARTICULAR CHALLENGE, AND OUR COMMUNICATIONS PEOPLE PASSED WITH FLYING COLORS," SAID CAPT. NUTWELL.

"I WAS VERY PLEASED WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF THE CREW", NUTWELL CONTINUED. "THE SHIP CARRIED OUT ALL OF HER ASSIGNED TASKS SUCCESSFULLY AND SMARTLY. BESIDES VISUAL AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS, OTHER AREAS WORTHY OF SPECIAL MENTION WERE BOATING, AIR OPERATIONS AND SUPPLY SUPPORT FOR THE MORE THAN 1000 PERSONNEL EMBARKED. THE VISUAL AND RADAR NAVIGATION TEAMS EXECUTED SEVERAL PRECISION ANCHORAGES AND, AS USUAL, TRENTON'S FINE ENGINEERS PROVIDED HIGHLY RELIABLE PROPULSION, ELECTRICAL POWER, AND CRITICAL AUXILIARIES. OVERALL, THE WHOLE CREW PERFORMED ENTHUSIASTICALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY DESPITE A LACK OF RECENT EXPERIENCE IN GROUP AMPHIBIOUS OPERATIONS. ALTHOUGH IT WAS A LOT OF HARD WORK THIS WAS 'GATOR OPS' AT IT'S BEST."

TRENTON SAILS THROUGH SOLID SHIELD '89
By JOSN (b) (6)

NORFOLK, VA.— The USS TRENTON (LPD-14) recently returned from a multi-force exercise involving Navy, Marine, Air Force, Army, Coast Guard and Merchant Marine units off the coast of North Carolina.

Operation Solid Shield began on 3 May. The highlight of the exercise was a coordinated amphibious/airborne assault at Onslow Beach, North Carolina. A rapid response force of nine amphibious assault ships, three destroyers as escorts, and an eight ship carrier battle group participated.

Capt. Robert M. Nutwell, Commanding Officer of Trenton said, "The operation provided invaluable training for Trenton. It tested our crisis response capability with a minimum of preparation. The fact that the exercise proceeded smoothly is a tribute to the professionalism and readiness of the ships involved."

As they would in an actual war, Coast Guard cutters escorted Trenton and the other amphibious ships from port in Norfolk, Va. Other cutters waited to escort her into Morehead City, North Carolina where she picked up an assault force of 610 U.S. Marines and the equipment needed for an amphibious assault.

Trenton's cargo decks were filled with approximately 70 motor vehicles. A landing craft (LCU-1655) from Assault Craft Unit 2 was carried in the well-deck. LCU-1655 was to play a key role in the off-loading of the Marines and their gear during the beach assault.

Also embarked onboard were four AH-1T Cobra gunships and two UH-1N Hueys from HML/A-167, the same squadron which had deployed with Trenton during her '88 Persian Gulf deployment. During Solid Shield the helicopters flew missions for training and in support of the amphibious landing. "Normally we embark four helicopters," said LT (b) (6) Air Officer aboard Trenton. "With all the gear that is on the flight deck it makes it tough to spot six helicopters. The flight deck crew are veterans at this sort of thing though. It was nice to work with HML/A-167 again. During our Persian Gulf deployment we had nine helicopters embarked. So Solid Shield brought us back up to operational readiness. I wouldn't trade this crew for anyone else because we've done what no other LPD has done."

Trenton left Morehead City under Coast Guard escort while other ships of the assault force loaded Marines. While at anchor, Trenton and her consorts fought off simulated attacks by missile patrol boats and terrorist boats. "We do a lot of training and Solid Shield gave us two weeks to put that training to work," said LCDR (b) (6) Operations Officer aboard Trenton.

The training was put to good use when a real emergency arose during a routine exercise. Two Marines were debarking by rope from a UH-1N Huey to the deck of the Trenton when they fell overboard. The Marines were recovered in good condition by Trenton's motor whale-boat which was launched within six minutes of the mishap.

On D-Day, Trenton's Cobras and Hueys supported the assault while other helicopters ferried troops and artillery pieces from Trenton's flight deck to the landing zone ashore. Meanwhile LCU-1655 and other LCUs offloaded the vehicles, cargo, and additional troops via the well deck.